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THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS

REPORT AND ANALYSIS
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TO PROMOTE THE NATIONAL SECURITY BY PROVIDING FOR
A NATIONAL DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT, WHICH SHALL BE
ADMINISTERED BY A SECRETARY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE,
AND FOR A DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, A DEPARTMENT
OF THE NAVY, AND A DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WITHIN THE NATIONAL DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT, AND
FOR THE COORDINATION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NA-
TIONAL DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT WITH OTHER DEPART-
MENTS AND AGENCIES OF THE GOVERNMENT CONCERNED
WITH THE NATIONAL SECURITY



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**REPORT AND ANALYSIS BY THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE
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SCOPE OF REPORT

In view of the variety of proposals made in recent years for the reorganization of the armed forces, and the tangled history of these proposals, it seems desirable to present this report in four parts, as follows:

- I. A brief chronological statement, covering developments from 1944 to the present.
- II. A summary of the more significant reorganization plans proposed during this period.
- III. A discussion of the evolution of reorganization proposals, describing the progressive concessions made by the Army, the Navy, and the President in the attempt to reach an accord.
- IV. A review of issues and arguments.

This arrangement involves some duplication and is designed to enable the reader to review one or another aspect of the problem without having to trace it throughout the entire report.

PART I. CHRONOLOGICAL STATEMENT

This discussion takes as a starting point the hearings on a single department of the armed forces conducted by the Select Committee of the House on Post-War Military Policy in the second session of the Seventy-eighth Congress, April-May 1944. The earlier history of the unification problem is important and interesting but is not essential to an analysis of the current controversy.¹ The major events from 1944 on are summarized below, in the order of their occurrence:

1. *Hearings before the Select Committee of the House of Representatives on Post-War Military Policy (78th Cong., 2d sess., pt. 1)*

Under the chairmanship of Representative Woodrum the committee held hearings from April 24 to May 19, inclusive, on the proposal to establish a single department of armed forces. Representatives of the War Department testified in favor of the proposal as a postwar measure. Lieutenant General McNarney, Deputy Chief of Staff, United States Army, presented a plan of unification. Representatives of the Navy Department were generally noncommittal and recommended further study. The committee reported June 15, 1944 (H. Rept. No. 1645, 78th Cong., 2d sess.), that the time was inopportune for legislation and strongly urged the armed services to make further studies of the problem.

¹ For brief summaries of unification proposals and studies prior to the outbreak of World War II see Unification of the War and Navy Departments and Postwar Organization for National Security (Eberstadt report), Senate Committee Print, 79th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 184-187, and Army-Navy Consolidation, Editorial Research Reports, vol. II, 1945, pp. 239-243.

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2. *Study by Joint Chiefs of Staff*

On May 9, 1944, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed a special committee to study the reorganization of national defense and make recommendations. The basic question was stated in the following terms:

What is the organization which will provide the most effective employment of our military resources in time of war and their most effective preparation for war, in time of peace?

The special committee, consisting of two representatives of the War Department and two representatives of the Navy Department, reported to the Joint Chiefs of Staff April 11, 1945. A majority favored a single department and reported that of the field officers interviewed almost all Army officers and almost exactly half of the Navy officers also favored one department. Detailed proposals were presented by the committee. One Navy representative, Admiral J. O. Richardson (retired), dissented, proposing that the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization be continued after the war by statute and that further study of the problem in the light of war experience be made. The Joint Chiefs of Staff took no action on the report.

3. *Eberstadt report*

On May 15, 1945, Chairman Walsh, of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, sent a letter to Secretary of the Navy Forrestal suggesting that a study be made to determine whether or not it would be desirable to propose the establishment of a Council on National Defense as an alternative to the proposal for a consolidation of the War and Navy Departments. On June 19 Secretary Forrestal requested Mr. Ferdinand Eberstadt to prepare a report and recommendations on the following matters:

1. Would unification of the War and Navy Departments under a single head improve our national security?
2. If not, what changes in the present relationships of the military services and departments has our war experience indicated as desirable to improve our national security?
3. What form of postwar organization should be established and maintained to enable the military services and other Government departments and agencies most effectively to provide for and protect our national security?

The report was transmitted to Secretary Forrestal September 25 and by him to Senator Walsh on October 18. It was printed for the use of the Naval Affairs Committee October 22, 1945.

The Eberstadt report opposed the establishment of a single department. It recommended three coordinate departments—War, Navy, and Air—each headed by a civilian secretary of Cabinet rank, and tied together by interdepartmental committees, with the Joint Chiefs of Staff the major link. It also placed great stress on committees and agencies linking the armed forces with the civilian departments.

4. *Hearings before the Senate Committee on Military Affairs*

This committee held hearings on two unification bills (S. 84 and S. 1482) from October 17 to December 17, 1945. Representatives of the War Department testified in favor of unification. General Collins presented a detailed plan for the War Department. Representatives of the Navy Department opposed a single department type of organization and other features of unification, and supported the "coordination" principle, largely as set forth in the Eberstadt report.

5. *President Truman's unification message of December 19, 1945*

In this message the President laid down a seven-point program for the reorganization of the armed forces. He strongly urged the establishment of a single department with three coordinate branches with a Chief of Staff to act as chief military adviser to the Secretary and the President.

6. *Report of Senate Military Affairs Committee*

On April 9, 1946, Senators Thomas, Hill, and Austin, members of a subcommittee of the Senate Military Affairs Committee, introduced S. 2044. The Thomas-Hill-Austin subcommittee reported to the full committee April 11, 1946. Its report was adopted by the committee and S. 2044 was favorably reported (13 to 2) on May 13. It followed fairly closely the President's recommendations and incorporated much of the Eberstadt report mechanism for civilian-military coordination.

7. *Hearings before the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs*

The committee began hearings on S. 2044 on April 30 and continued to hold hearings through July 11. Representatives of the Navy Department opposed S. 2044. The committee did not report out the bill.

8. *Presidential efforts to secure Army-Navy agreement*

On May 13 the President instructed the War and Navy Departments to attempt to reach an agreement on a plan for the organization of the armed forces. On May 15 a letter was sent by Senator Walsh, chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, and representative Vinson, chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, to Secretary Forrestal in which it was stated that it was doubtful if any agreement providing for a single department would meet with the approval of Congress. Other features of the bill were also said to have little chance of securing congressional approval. The letter concluded:

Any compromise which results from a conference by the War and Navy Departments which does not embody most of the views of those Members of Congress who have made a study of the importance of sea-air power in our national defense structure and which in general does not conform with the views expressed in this letter would not, in our opinion, be in the best interests of the United States.

On June 15 President Truman sent identical letters to Senators Thomas and Walsh and Representatives May and Vinson, transmitting documents showing points upon which the War and Navy Departments had agreed and disagreed and submitting his own recommendations on the items of disagreement. S. 2044 was revised, but opposition continuing, the President requested that the measure be dropped.

9. *Unified command announcement of December 16, 1946*

The War and Navy Departments announced on this date that unified command had been established in seven command areas in various parts of the world. The commander in each area was to be responsible directly to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. (The principle of unified command in theaters of operation was established after Pearl Harbor and was generally applied during the war. It was not used in the Pacific area for the assault on Japan. With the end of the war the idea of unity of command in the field had gradually disintegrated.)

10. *Presidential announcement of Army-Navy agreement, January 16, 1946*

Letters to the President from Secretary of the Navy Forrestal and Secretary of War Patterson stated that agreement had been reached to support legislation providing for a Secretary of National Defense with general over-all direction over three departments—War, Navy, and Air—and for other coordinating agencies. There was also agreement on a draft of an Executive order assigning functions to the three branches of the armed forces. The President stated that in his opinion the agreement reached was “an admirable compromise,” and “a thoroughly practical and workable plan of unification” and that he heartily approved it.

11. *Transmittal of proposed bill by the President, February 26, 1947*

In a communication directed to the Speaker of the House and Senator Vandenberg, the President stated that the proposed bill had been drafted by representatives of the armed services and had the approval of the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He added:

It is my belief that this suggested legislation accomplishes the desired unification of the services, and I heartily recommend its enactment.

PART II. SUMMARY OF MAJOR PROPOSALS

Beginning with the War Department plan submitted to the House Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy (Woodrum committee) in the spring of 1944, there has been a succession of proposals for the reorganization of the armed forces. Particularly significant in the development of the controversy were the proposal of the special committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, April 11, 1945; the Eberstadt plan; the plans presented by the War Department at the hearings of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs; the President's proposals of December 19, 1945; the Thomas-Hill-Austin bill (S. 2044); the President's plan of June 15, 1946; and the draft of a proposed bill submitted to the Congress by the President, February 26, 1947. There follows a summary of each of these proposals.

1. *1944 War Department proposal*²

This proposal had three general features:

(a) There would be a single Department of Armed Forces headed by a Secretary who would be the principal adviser to the President and the Congress on political and administrative matters relating to national defense. There would be Under Secretaries for the Army, Navy, and Air, and also a Director of Common Supply Services.

(b) There would be a U. S. Joint Chiefs of Staff headed by a Chief of Staff and including the Chiefs of Staff of the Army, Navy, and Air Forces. The Director of Common Supply Services would be included on a subordinate status. The Joint Chiefs of Staff would be the President's military advisers and would report directly to him in the field of military strategy and on budgetary recommendations and the allocation of appropriated funds.

² See testimony of Lieutenant General McNarney, hearings before the Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy, House of Representatives, 78th Cong., 2d sess., pt. I, pp. 34-37, chart, p. 38.

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(c) It was recommended that the legislation establishing a single department be general in character. The Secretary for the Armed Forces would have over-all control of such matters as procurement, supply of common items, storage, construction, provision of facilities, welfare, financial administration, hospitalization, personnel standards and administration, recruiting, military education in civilian institutions, and public relations. The manner of administering the department and the extent of decentralization would be left to develop in an evolutionary manner.

2. *Report of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Special Committee for Reorganization of National Defense*³

The recommendations of the majority of the special committee go into considerable detail. The essential features of the plan recommended are as follows:

(a) There would be a single Department of Armed Forces headed by a civilian Secretary, who would be the principal adviser to the President on the political, economic, and industrial aspects of military problems; be responsible for the administration of the Department; and act as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Directly responsible to him would be a Commander of the Armed Forces, an Under Secretary for business matters, and several assistant secretaries for staff functions.

(b) There would be an Under Secretary for Business Matters, occupying roughly the same position for such matters as the Commander of the Armed Forces has for military matters. He would have such assistant secretaries as might be required for the various duties that would have to be performed.

(c) There would be one military Commander of the Armed Forces who would also be Chief of Staff to the President and a member of the United States Chiefs of Staff. He would have responsibility for the decision of all questions involving command and military control of the armed forces. He would have a staff which would be concerned with matters involving more than one component. There would also be Deputy Chiefs of Staff for personnel, intelligence, plans, and operations, and logistics.

(d) There would be three coordinate components—Army, Navy, and Air Force—each headed by a single commander and each having a considerable measure of autonomy in operation.

(e) There would be a United States Chief of Staff to advise the President on broad matters of military strategy and on budgetary matters. The members would be the Secretary, the Commander of the Armed Forces, and the commanders of the three components.

3. *Eberstadt report recommendations*⁴

(a) Three coordinate Departments—War, Air, and Navy—were recommended. Each would have a civilian Secretary, a civilian Under Secretary, and such assistant secretaries as might be needed, commanded by a military officer. Navy and Army air arms would be retained.

³ Hearings before the Committee on Military Affairs, U. S. Senate, 79th Cong. 1st sess., pp. 411 ff., chart opposite 412.

⁴ See report to Hon. James Forrestal on Unification of the War and Navy Departments and Postwar Organization for National Security, Senate Committee Print, 79th Cong. 1st sess., pp. 6 ff., also chart opp. p. 6.

(b) A National Security Council would be established to link up military and foreign policy. It would be composed of the Secretaries of State, War, Navy, and Air, the Chairman of the National Security Resources Board, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The President would be the Chairman, and in his absence the Vice President or the Secretary of State. The Council would have a permanent secretariat. It would have policy-forming and advisory functions and would among other things advise on the combined military budget. The Central Intelligence Agency would be a part of it.

(c) The Joint Chiefs of Staff would be given a statutory basis and would advise on strategy, logistic plans, and budgetary matters. In these areas the Joint Chiefs of Staff would constitute the major coordinating mechanism for the three Departments.

(d) A National Security Resources Board would be set up to work out industrial and civilian mobilization plans. It would be composed of representatives of the War, Navy, and Air Departments, the Chairman of the Military Munitions Board, and representatives of such other temporary or regular agencies as might be involved. The Chairman would be an appointee of the President with full power of decision.

(e) A Military Munitions Board, with functions broader than those of the Army-Navy Munitions Board, would act as a coordinating agency in the field of procurement and logistics. Its members would be the civilian Under Secretaries of the three Departments. A civilian Chairman appointed by the President would have full power of decision. The Committee would supervise all joint committees on procurement and logistics matters.

(f) Each Department would have an Assistant Secretary for Scientific Research and Development. A civilian research agency was recommended to link civilian and military research.

(g) A Military Education and Training Board, under the supervision of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, would coordinate military education and training. It would be composed of representatives of the three Departments, and would have an Advisory Board on Military Education and Training.

(h) A Central Intelligence Agency would be established in the National Security Council.

4. War Department (Collins) plan⁵

The War Department plan proposed at the Senate Military Affairs Committee hearings in 1945 was a modification of the plan recommended by the special committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

(a) There would be a single Department of Armed Forces, with a civilian Secretary, a civilian Under Secretary, and three or more civilian assistant secretaries to coordinate scientific research, procurement, and industrial mobilization plans, and legislative affairs and information.

(b) A Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, assisted by a small staff for military personnel matters, intelligence, joint training, and logistics, would be in command of the military aspect of the Department, under the Secretary.

(c) Under the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces would be the

⁵ See hearings before the Committee on Military Affairs, U. S. Senate, 79th Cong. 1st sess., pp. 156 ff., also chart opposite p. 156.

three major components, each headed by a Chief of Staff (Chief of Naval Operations in the case of the Navy). Each component would have a considerable measure of autonomy and would retain its own service system. The Secretary would be able to consult directly with the three Chiefs of Staff. The theater commanders would also be under the direction of the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces.

(d) There would be a Director of Common Supply and Hospitalization, also under the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces.

(e) The U. S. Chiefs of Staff, consisting of the Chief of Staff to the President, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, and the Chiefs of Staff of the three components, would have powers of recommendation on military policy, strategy, and budgetary requirements. Their recommendations would go to the President through the Secretary, with his comments. Any dissenting member could report to the President through the Secretary.

(f) The Chief of Staff to the President and the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces would not be taken from the same component at any given time. Their terms as well as those of the Chiefs of Staff of the components would be limited in order to insure rotation of office.

5. *President Truman's first plan*⁶

(a) There would be a single Department of National Defense, with a civilian Secretary. A civilian Under Secretary, and several civilian assistant secretaries, would be available for assignment to whatever duties the President and the Secretary might determine from time to time.

(b) The Department would have three coordinate branches, each under an assistant secretary. The Navy would retain its own carrier-ship and water-based aviation, and the Marine Corps.

(c) The President and the Secretary would be given ample authority to establish central coordinating and service organizations, military and civilian. The details should not be specified in legislation, but should be left to executive decision.

(d) There would be a Chief of Staff of National Defense and a commander for each of the three components.

(e) The Chief of Staff and the three Commanders would constitute an advisory body to the President and the Secretary. The position of Chief of Staff would rotate among the three components. The President and the Secretary could communicate directly with the three Commanders.

(f) It was recommended that the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee be continued, and that following reorganization of the armed forces military research be coordinated under one agency, and a government-wide intelligence service be established.

6. *The Thomas-Hill-Austin bill (S. 2044, 79th Cong., 2d sess.)*⁷

(a) There would be a single Department of Common Defense, headed by a civilian Secretary. The War and Navy Departments would be abolished. The Department of Common Defense would

⁶ Message to Congress from the President, December 19, 1945, Daily Congressional Record, pp. 12573-12577.

⁷ As reported out by the Senate Military Affairs Committee, May 13, 1946. See Senate Report No. 1328, 79th Cong., 2d Sess., which accompanied S. 2044. Substantial amendments were proposed following the President's recommendations of June 15. See Committee Print of June 26, 1946.

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have a civilian Under Secretary and a civilian Secretary, without cabinet status, for each of the three components—Army, Navy, and Air Force.

(b) Four Assistant Secretaries, under the Secretary, would supervise and coordinate scientific research and development; intelligence activities; procurement, logistics, industrial mobilization and hospitalization; and educational and training activities.

(c) A Chief of Staff of Common Defense would act as the Secretary's chief military adviser, and would also act as chief military adviser of the President. The appointment would be rotated. The Chief of Staff would have a small staff.

(d) A Chief of Staff of Common Defense and the commanding officers of the three components would constitute a Joint Staff of the Department. The Joint Staff would make recommendations to the President through the Secretary on military policy, strategy, and budgetary requirements. The Secretary could attach his comment on these recommendations. Any one of the three commanding officers could report to the President after consideration by the Joint Staff, through the Secretary, who could add his comment to those of the Joint Staff.

(e) The President would be authorized to reorganize the Department and its military components under the provisions of the Reorganization Act of 1945, with the proviso that no component could be abolished.

(f) A Council of Common Defense would be set up as an independent agency, to coordinate foreign and military policy. It would be headed by the Secretary of State and would include the Secretary of Common Defense and the Chairman of the National Security Resources Board. It would have a permanent secretariat with an Executive Secretary.

(g) There would also be a National Security Resources Board for industrial and civilian mobilization planning. This Board would be under the authority of the Council of Common Defense.

(h) A Central Intelligence Agency, operating as an agency of the Council of Common Defense, would compile, analyze, evaluate and disseminate information gathered by civilian and military agencies.

7. *President Truman's second plan*⁸

This plan contained twelve points. Eight represented agreement between the War and Navy Departments. On four there was disagreement. ((a), (b), (c), and (d) below.)

(a) There would be a single Department of National Defense with a civilian Secretary. Each of the three services would have a civilian Secretary, who would not have a seat in the Cabinet. The civilian Secretaries would be members of the Council of Common Defense. (The Navy Department opposed a single Department.)

(b) The three services—Army, Navy, and Air Forces—would have parity. (The Navy Department preferred to preserve the two Department arrangement.)

(c) The Navy would retain some naval aviation but not as much as it wanted.

(d) The Marine Corps would remain in the Navy with its mission intact. (The War Department position would have reduced its mission.)

⁸ See letter from President Truman to Senators Thomas and Walsh, and Representatives May and Vinson, June 15, 1946.

On the remaining eight points there was agreement.

(e) A Council of National Defense, consisting of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of National Defense, the civilian Secretaries of the three military services, and the Chairman of the National Security Resources Board, would integrate foreign and military policies.

(f) A National Security Resources Board, under the Council of National Defense, would establish and keep up to date policies and programs for the use of the nation's resources in support of our national security. It would be composed of representatives of the military services and other appropriate agencies.

(g) The Joint Chiefs of Staff would formulate strategic plans, assign logistic responsibilities to the services, integrate military programs, and make recommendations on budgetary matters. It would be the highest source of military advice.

(h) There would be no single military Chief of Staff. (The War Department agreed to drop this feature.)

(i) A Central Intelligence Agency, under the Council of National Defense, would compile, analyze, and evaluate information gathered by military and civilian agencies.

(j) (k) (l) Agencies would be established to coordinate military supply and procurement, scientific research and development in the military services, and military education and training.

8. *Draft of proposed bill submitted by the President, February, 26, 1947*

(a) A National Defense Establishment would be created, headed by a civilian Secretary of National Defense. The Establishment would consist of the Departments of the Navy, Army (instead of War), and Air Force, together with all other agencies created within the Establishment. The Secretary of National Defense would establish policies and programs for the Establishment and for the departments and agencies therein; exercise authority and control over such agencies; and formulate and finally determine the budget estimates and control the budget program.

(b) The Departments of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force, under the direction of the Secretary of National Defense, would be administered as individual units by their respective Secretaries. The Secretary of any one of the three departments would be permitted to present to the President any report or recommendation relating to his Department, after so informing the Secretary of National Defense.

(c) The Secretary of National Defense would be authorized to appoint not more than four special civilian assistants, and such other civilian personnel as might be required to perform the functions of the National Defense Establishment. He would be specifically prohibited from establishing a military staff, but officers of the Army, Navy, and Air Force could be detailed to him as assistants and personal aids.

(d) A Department of the Air Force would be created, containing the United States Air Force. Transferred to the United States Air Force would be the Army Air Forces; the Air Corps, United States Army; and the General Headquarters Air Force (Air Force Combat Command).

(e) A War Council would be set up within the National Defense Establishment. It would be composed of the four Secretaries, and the Chiefs of Staff of the three departments (Chief of Naval Operations in the case of the Navy). The Secretary of National Defense

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would have power of decision. The Council would advise the Secretary of National Defense on matters of broad policy.

(f) The Joint Chiefs of Staff, consisting of the Chiefs of Staff of the three departments and the Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief, if any, would be established within the Defense Establishment. Subject to the authority and direction of the President and the Secretary of National Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff would prepare strategic plans and provide strategic direction; prepare logistic plans; establish unified area commands when needed; formulate policies for joint training; review material and personnel requirements of the military forces; provide United States representation on the Military Staff Committee of the United Nations; and act as military advisers to the President and the Secretary of National Defense. Under the Joint Chiefs of Staff, would be a Joint Staff of not more than one hundred officers, composed of approximately equal numbers of officers from the Army, Navy, and Air Forces.

(g) A Munitions Board, composed of a civilian Chairman appointed by the Secretary of National Defense and an Under Secretary or Assistant Secretary from each of the three military departments, would provide coordination within the Establishment with regard to various aspects of procurement, production, distribution, and other industrial and service functions.

(h) A Research and Development Board would be set up in the Defense Establishment to coordinate research activities within the Establishment and advise the Secretary of National Defense on matters of research.

(i) Outside the National Defense Establishment would be established a National Security Council, and under it a Central Intelligence Agency. There would be also established a National Security Resources Board. These agencies would coordinate military and civilian policies, programs, and plans in their respective fields. (See the Eberstadt recommendations and later proposals.)

PART III. EVOLUTION OF PLANS

In the early stages of the discussion of the problem of reorganization of the armed forces "unification" was the great issue. As the controversy developed and compromise proposals were advanced, however, the term "unification" became exceedingly flexible. In the early War Department plans and in the recommendation of the special committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, unification signified (1) a single department, the Secretary of which would be the sole representative of the armed forces in the Cabinet, and (2) the provision of a considerable measure of centralized direction and administration of both military and other activities.

A Chief of Staff was to be the chief military adviser to the Secretary and to the President and was to occupy a position superior to that of the commanding officers of the Army, Navy, and Air Forces. The Joint Chiefs of Staff idea was to be maintained, but in an advisory capacity only, and with limited functions. On the non-military side the Secretary would have an Under Secretary and a number of Assistant Secretaries to direct common services and to supervise and coordinate the programs and policies of the three components. A considerable measure of autonomy in operation was to be preserved

by the components, but in terms both of legal authority and administrative mechanism the single Department was to be a department in fact and not merely a loose alliance or coordinating mechanism.

The Eberstadt report and recommendations injected a quite different note in the discussion. Accepting the challenge that organizational changes were needed, the report recommended the establishment of an Air Department and the setting up of various coordinating agencies, some to coordinate policies and programs of the military departments and some to coordinate military policies and programs with intimately related civilian programs. On the military side the key agencies were to be the Joint Chiefs of Staff for strategy and military policy and the Military Munitions Board for procurement and other matters. The National Security Council, and under its supervision a National Security Resources Board and a Central Intelligence Agency, would constitute the grand coordinating mechanism on military-civilian matters.

At this stage the issue was "unification," as proposed by the War Department and the special committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, versus "coordination" as proposed by the Eberstadt report and generally endorsed by the Navy Department. The Navy Department favored two Departments rather than three, as recommended in the Eberstadt report, but preferred the three-department arrangement to a single department. The proposals for an over-all coordinating mechanism did not constitute an issue between the War and Navy Departments.

President Truman's message of December 19, 1945, recommended legislation along the lines proposed by the War Department and the special committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He proposed a single Department with three coordinate branches, a single Chief of Staff of the Department, and ample authority and staff to permit the gradual unification and coordination of programs and services.

The Thomas-Hill-Austin Bill (S. 2044, 79th Cong. 2d sess.), as reported out by the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, followed fairly closely the President's recommendations and superimposed on them the Eberstadt report proposals for military-civilian coordination, including a Council of Common Defense and subordinate to it a National Security Resources Board and a Central Intelligence Agency. A variation from the President's recommendations was the assignment of definite responsibilities to some of the civilian Assistant Secretaries for such matters as scientific research and development, military intelligence, procurement and related matters, and military education and training. The President's recommendation had been to leave all such details of organization to the President and the Secretary.

Thus far the major issue was still "unification," although in order to meet objections of the Navy Department increasing emphasis had been placed by advocates of unification on the desirability of insuring as great a degree of autonomy as practicable to the major components. On June 15, 1946, President Truman recommended a twelve-point program of reorganization in a letter to Senators Thomas and Walsh and Representatives May and Vinson. The letter revealed that the War Department was willing to make substantial concessions to the Navy Department's objections to unification, and that the President

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also was willing to modify his earlier position. The major feature omitted in the new recommendations was the position of Chief of Staff. This meant an enhancement of the position of the United States Chiefs of Staff, and consequently of the status of the commanding officers of the three components.

Another indication of the greater prestige to be accorded the three branches of the Department was the proposal that the civilian Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force be members of the Council of Common Defense. Equally noteworthy was the omission of specific reference to a departmental staff. There were general recommendations for the establishment of "agencies" in the fields of procurement and supply, research, and military education and training. Their status was not indicated, but they appeared designed as coordinating rather than operating agencies.

Substantial differences of opinion remained, the major one concerning the desirability of having a single department. The Navy Department still favored the two-department arrangement, but apparently was not too strongly opposed to the three-department set-up provided it were permitted to retain the kind of air force it desired. It is quite clear, however, that the kind of "unification" provided in the President's recommendations is quite different from that contemplated theretofore by the advocates of a single department.

As stated in the President's letter:

Each service would retain its autonomy, subject of course to the authority and over-all control by the Secretary of National Defense. It is recognized that the services have different functions and different organizations and for these reasons the integrity of each service should be retained.

This general statement, taken in conjunction with the omission of a single Chief of Staff and of specific provision for other Departmental staffing, reveals the extent to which the idea of unification had been modified in the attempt to bring about a reconciliation of Army and Navy viewpoints.

The authors of S. 2044 proposed amendments in the Bill to carry out the President's recommendations, but no action was taken.

The draft of the proposed Bill submitted by the President, February 26, 1947, which incorporates the legislative program agreed on by the War and Navy Departments as announced by the President January 16, still further enhances the autonomous position of the three branches of the service by designating them as Departments, each headed by a Secretary. The earlier unification idea is represented by the provision for a Secretary of National Defense, who as head of the National Defense Establishment (not Department) would apparently be the sole Cabinet member from the armed forces, and would exercise authority, supervision, and control over the Departments and agencies within the Establishment. In other respects the Bill appears to follow rather closely the Eberstadt report proposals, with provision for a War Council (an added feature), a Joint Chiefs of Staff, a Munitions Board, and a Research and Development Board within the National Defense Establishment, and a National Security Council, a Central Intelligence Agency, and a National Security Resources Board to coordinate military and civilian agencies.

It is interesting to compare the compromise reached by the War and Navy Departments with the original War Department and Navy

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Department views and with President Truman's first message. The War Department and the President have yielded on the idea of a single department, and on the matter of a single Chief of Staff. The role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the latest plan is more prominent than in their earlier proposals. In addition, it would appear from the draft of the executive order included in the President's announcement of January 16 that the War Department has yielded to the Navy Department's position with respect to the role of the Marine Corps and of the Navy's air arm: The President at first sided with the War Department on both issues, but has indicated his approval of the latest agreement.

The Navy Department has modified its position to the extent of agreeing with the provision for a National Defense Establishment, headed by a Secretary of National Defense who would have broad authority over the Departments. It has also apparently yielded on Cabinet status for the Secretaries of the Departments. It has agreed to the establishment of a Department of the Air Force, but is to retain its own air arm.

An evaluation of the relative importance of the mutual concessions is extremely difficult because of uncertainty as to the precise extent and character of the authority of the Secretary of National Defense.

PART IV. ANALYSIS OF ISSUES AND ARGUMENTS

The fundamental issue in the controversy over reorganization of the armed forces has been the method rather than the desirability of reorganization. All concerned have been in agreement that the prewar form of organization will no longer suffice, and that, at a minimum, legislation should be enacted placing on a permanent statutory basis the major changes put into effect during the war.

Prior to Pearl Harbor the chief means of securing coordination between the War and Navy Departments, short of the President, was the use of joint committees. In the field of operational planning the Joint Board, established in 1903, had advisory powers only. Action could be taken on its decisions only through the Secretaries. A large number of joint committees grew up in other areas to work on common problems.

After Pearl Harbor the number of joint committees increased rapidly. In the critical area of military policy and strategy, however, the Joint Board was not adequate. Though never abolished it was in effect replaced by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, set up by the President in February 1942. This body never had a formal charter, but it gradually assumed broad powers of action. In matters involving new and major policies, and in matters where unanimity could not be obtained, decision rested with the President. Subject to these limitations, however, the Joint Chiefs of Staff actually directed military policy and strategy.

Neither the War Department nor the Navy Department proposed returning to the prewar system. The Navy Department took the position that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had operated with great success during the war and should by statute be made the permanent chief coordinating agency on military, strategic, and other matters. The joint committee system used during the war to coordinate the two Departments with reference to supply, procurement, personnel and

other matters would be continued, but placed on a more systematic basis. The War Department and the President contended that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the joint committee device, though an improvement over the prewar organization, should be replaced by a single department of the armed forces with a single military Chief of Staff. Considerable autonomy would be left to the component services, but the separate Departments would be abolished.

Subsidiary to the main issue, but very important to it, was the issue of the postwar status of the air force. During the war, Army Air Forces was given a virtually autonomous position by Executive Order. The War Department proposed that the air arm be given parity with the Army and the Navy in a single department. Its early proposals indicated that the projected air force would take over a considerable part of the Navy's air arm. The Navy Department countered by saying that the postwar status of Army Air Forces within the War Department was the War Department's problem, but that the Navy needed its own air arm and was opposed to the idea of a single department with three coordinate branches.

Although the War and Navy Departments have now agreed on a compromise plan which has the President's approval, it is still important to review the arguments advanced for and against the earlier unification proposals. On the side of unification the main arguments may be stated, briefly, as follows:

1. A unified military command is essential to a unified military program and to proper strategic planning. The Joint Chiefs of Staff is not a unified command. Under pressure of war it was possible for the members of the Staff to reach agreement on most matters. Even so, some aspects of military policy were not taken up, and in other instances delays occurred. With the pressure of war removed, the principle of voluntary agreement would operate less and less effectively. A Joint Chiefs of Staff should be retained in an advisory capacity, but it is essential that there be a single Chief of Staff to provide a unified top military command.

2. A single department organization with a unified military command is essential to the operation of unified command in the field, the desirability of which is conceded. Field commanders are hampered in carrying out operations by divided command at home, with all that that implies in the way of delays, differences in policies, training, procurement methods, etc.

3. Unification would make possible an integration of budgetary requirements and a planned control of budgetary allocations. Under the present system there is no real budgetary planning for the armed services. Congress is presented with estimates prepared by the two Departments with very little regard to each other's programs. Proper integration requires the establishment of a single department.

4. Unification would make possible large savings and greater efficiency in matters of procurement, supply, bases, etc. Duplication, competition in bidding, unnecessary differences in specifications and other forms of waste and inefficiency were commonplace during the war. Joint boards and joint committees, composed of Departmental representatives and operating on a basis of voluntary agreement, cannot provide the degree of efficiency and economy that could be effected under a single department.

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5. For similar reasons, a single department type of organization could be more effective than joint boards and joint committees in coordinating military research, military training programs, military personnel policies, and military intelligence activities. Voluntary agreement is an inadequate device for eliminating the duplications, discriminations, undesirable competition, and absence of coordination that exist in these areas.

6. The desirability of parity for the air forces increases the need for a single department of the armed forces. The difficulties of coordinating two Departments are great enough; with three Departments the confusion, waste, and lack of integration would be much increased. Moreover, the President would be called on more than ever to settle inter-service disputes that ought to be adjusted at a lower level.

7. A unified department of the armed forces, with a single Cabinet representative, would make for more effective civilian control and would facilitate the coordination of the armed forces department with civilian agencies. With separate departments the Secretaries tend to represent their respective services, and civilian control is discounted. Furthermore, it is not possible to coordinate the policies and programs of the armed forces with those of civilian agencies concerned when there is no effective coordination within the armed forces themselves.

8. Unification would not "merge" the three services, removing all distinctions and breaking down service traditions. Administration would be decentralized as far as practicable, and no fears need exist that any one of the services would be subordinated to the others. Through a system of rotation care can be taken that top military command is never long held by representatives of any one component.

Opponents of the proposal for a single department with a Chief of Staff accepted most of the objectives stated in the above arguments. They contended, however, that unification was the wrong method. Whereas proponents of unification argued that that type of organization was necessary to provide unified military policy and strategy, unified command in the field, an integrated budget, efficiency and economy, proper coordination of research, intelligence, training and personnel programs, maintenance of civilian control, and proper coordination with civilian agencies, opponents of the scheme flatly stated that the two-Department arrangement, coordinated by a Joint Chiefs of Staff and a system of joint boards and committees, furnished a better method for attaining these objectives. The chief arguments against unification may be stated as follows:

1. Postwar organization of the armed forces should be based on experience. Unification is an untried experiment in this country. On the other hand, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the system of joint boards and committees operated successfully during the war. There were few instances where the Joint Chiefs of Staff failed to reach agreement, or where serious delays occurred in reaching decisions. The war experience demonstrated that unified command in theaters of operations could be successfully exercised without departmental unification. Unquestionably coordination in matters of procurement and supply, research, training, personnel policies, and intelligence activities was not always as

effective as it might have been. Failures due to administrative weaknesses, however, have been exaggerated. The magnitude of operations made complete coordination impossible, regardless of the form of organization. To the extent that faulty organization was responsible, it was due to the necessity of constructing a coordinating mechanism in the midst of a war. These failures point, not to the abandonment of the idea of coordination, but to the rationalization and perfection of the joint coordinating machinery.

2. Unification of top military command and of the organization to determine military policy and strategy and to exercise budgetary control might result in the relegation of one of the branches of the service to a subordinate role. (This argument was used with reference to the position of the Navy.) A sound and secure military program is best guaranteed by maintaining the independence of the services, and by having a Joint Chiefs of Staff to furnish the necessary integration. A single Chief of Staff would possess a dangerous degree of power and it would be almost impossible to find an officer with broad enough training and vision to be entrusted with it.

3. Likewise with respect to the civilian aspects of armed forces administration, it would be unwise to place the entire administration under one Secretary. For one thing, the job is too big for one man. Also, the two Departments are organized along quite different lines, and an attempt to unify them would cause endless confusion. Still more significant is the danger that the specialized and distinctive needs of the different service arms might be disregarded in a unified department. There are often sound reasons for parallel facilities, special requirements, distinctive procurement systems, competition in research, different training methods, etc. No doubt a greater degree of coordination can be secured, but changes should result from voluntary agreement of the services following careful study and discussion, and not from the imposition of directives from the top.

4. Unification proposals are not specific enough concerning the relation of the service components to the department. It is all very well to say that the details of administration should be allowed to work themselves out, but the nature of the relationship is not a detail.

5. Claims of increased efficiency and economy by unification proponents are dubious. Requirements of the services would be the same regardless of the form of organization. The probabilities are that such a large-scale organization as a unified department of the armed forces would be less efficient than the present arrangement. An enormous overhead administrative machinery would inevitably develop.

6. The problem of an autonomous air force can be solved without the creation of a unified department of the armed forces. Army Air Forces can be given a permanent status of autonomy within the War Department, or, as an alternative, a separate Department of the Air Force can be established. (The Eberstadt report recommended the latter. The Navy Department preferred the former. The Navy's major concern, however, was the retention of its own air arm whatever happened to Army Air

Forces. It might also be pointed out here that the Navy Department objected to the War Department's unification proposals on the grounds that Army Ground Forces would take over a part of the mission of the Marine Corps.)

7. Unification would weaken civilian control, because the larger the establishment the easier it is for the military to exercise real control.

8. Unification would do nothing to remedy the outstanding weakness in existing organization—the absence of an effective mechanism for coordinating the military services with civilian agencies.

It was for many reasons difficult for the impartial observer to evaluate these arguments for and against unification. The validity of some of them hinged on the history of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which of course was not available. Wartime operations in matters of procurement and supply and in other areas were on such a vast scale that generalizations could not easily be checked. Experience of other countries was inconclusive. One principle of administrative organization could be set off against another, making judgment an art rather than a science. An objective, such as "the maintenance of civilian control," though commonly accepted, was not susceptible of precise definition, besides which no formula was known by which it might be attained. For these and other reasons, the controversy was by many regarded mainly as a scrap between the Army and the Army Air Forces on the one hand and the Navy on the other. Witnesses for the Navy Department made it clear that they feared that the prestige and power of the Navy would be endangered by the establishment of a unified organization in which the Navy would be one of three coordinate branches. They cited as grounds for their fears the proposal to include part of the naval air arm in the proposed Air Force, and the proposed transfer of part of the Marine Corps Mission to the Army. The bitterness of the controversy between the Army and the Navy became in the minds of many an argument against unification.

In the spring of 1946 the President directed the War and Navy Departments to attempt to reconcile their differences. From that point on the unification issue in fact gradually dropped out of the picture, though the word and many of the arguments about it continued to be employed. The Army-Navy agreement embodied in the draft of the proposed Bill submitted by the President, February 26, 1947, does not provide for "unification" of the armed forces in the sense in which the early War Department plans, the President's message of December 19, 1945, and S. 2044, as reported out by the Senate Military Affairs Committee in the spring of 1946, used that term. The War Department and the Navy Department would not be abolished, though the name of the War Department would be changed to the Department of the Army and the present Army Air Forces would become the core of a new Department of the Air Force. There would be a Secretary of National Defense, and a National Defense Establishment, but no Department of National Defense. There would be no unified top military command. The three Departments would be administered as individual units by their respective Secretaries, under the direction of the Secretary of National Defense. (For detailed summary see pt. II (8) of this report.)

Only a tentative evaluation of the Army-Navy compromise proposal can be made at this time. Some of the more important considerations are as follows:

1. The fact that the War and Navy Departments are apparently in agreement on the proposal removes one objection that was serious in the case of unification. On the other hand, it may be argued that the compromise achieved lacks the advantages either of unification or of the joint board and joint committee method of coordination.

2. The argument advanced for unification to the effect that a single Chief of Staff is essential to the proper integration of military policy and strategy and to the successful operation of unified command in the field, constitutes an argument *against* the compromise plan. Irrespective of the relative merits of the Chief of Staff versus the Joint Chiefs of Staff arrangement, there are substantial differences between the two, not only with respect to the nature of the command, but also with respect to the nature of the staff. Though the staff members in both cases be drawn from the components in approximately equal numbers, they are more likely to act as representatives of their respective components in the case of the Joint Chiefs of Staff arrangement than in the case of a unified command.

3. The administrative structure is admittedly complicated, and its operation full of uncertainties. What is an "Establishment," and what would be the exact status of the three Departments therein? How much power in fact would the Secretary of National Defense be able to exercise? His legal authority is stated in broad terms, but ability to exercise authority is dependent on, among other things, adequate staffing facilities. Will his position evolve into that of the head of a *unified* organization of the armed forces, or will he be merely a sort of over-all coordinator of a group of practically independent Departments and autonomous boards?

These complexities and uncertainties do not necessarily constitute arguments against the compromise. It can be argued that any organization in as vast a field as that of the national defense will in reality be complicated, no matter how orderly and simple it looks on paper. It can also be argued that the proposed arrangement insures flexibility, and makes possible an evolutionary approach to the complex problems of coordination.

On the other hand, it may be argued that the proposed arrangement makes coordination more difficult than at present, and throws a greater burden of decision on the President. The plan provides for four Secretaries instead of the present two, all having access to the President.

4. Thus far no claims of substantial *immediate* economies have been made for the new plan. In fact it is likely that the immediate effect of the reorganization would be an increase in the cost of administration. The administrative overhead for three Departments would very likely be greater than for two, and besides there would be the cost of administering the National Defense Establishment and the new or enlarged Boards and coordinating agencies.

On the other hand, long-run savings and increased efficiency will result if the Establishment and the agencies under it succeed in achieving hoped-for economies in facilities, supplies, research and scientific development, and other areas. It should also be pointed out that opponents of unification expressed skepticism concerning the claims made of the economies that it would bring about.

5. The proposed plan and the proposed executive order contained in the President's release of January 16 indicate that the Army has agreed to accept the Navy's position respecting the role of the Navy air arm and of the Marine Corps. The plan provides for a Department of the Air Force, but the Air Force is to be constituted by transfer of the Army Air Forces; the Air Corps, United States Army; and the General Headquarters Air Force (Air Force Combat Command). These decisions remove some of the Navy Department's more serious objections both to unification and to the creation of a separate Department of the Air Force. It could be argued, however, that the decision to leave Navy's air arm intact makes less necessary than ever the creation of a separate Department of the Air Force.

6. The mechanism for coordinating the National Defense Establishment with civilian agencies has not at any time constituted an issue between the War and Navy Departments. The present proposals, calling for a National Security Council, a Central Intelligence Agency, and a National Security Resources Board, have been generally accepted from the time of the Eberstadt recommendations. The State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee and the National Intelligence Authority, Presidential creations, have performed some of these coordinating functions. The proposed agencies are related to, but not a part of the organization of the armed forces, and under the proposed bill would not be a part of the National Defense Establishment.

Since this report deals with the general problems involved in the reorganization of the armed forces, no attempt will be made to analyze the more detailed administrative provisions in the proposed bill. Difference of opinion regarding some of them may well arise. The basic question, however, is whether the compromise reached provides, under all the circumstances, a more promising arrangement than either unification or the joint board and joint committee type of organization. One of the major difficulties in attempting to reach an answer to this question is the difficulty of visualizing how the proposed method of organization would actually operate. The essence of the compromise is to superimpose a Secretary of National Defense, head of a National Defense Establishment, on the coordinating machinery recommended in the Eberstadt report. Perhaps in the course of hearings and discussion more light will be thrown on the Secretary's role and on the degree of independence reserved to the departments. Pending further discussion and clarification of these matters, widely differing conclusions are bound to be drawn concerning the significance of the proposed organization, and judgment as to its efficacy will be largely hypothetical.